

The Mennonites

~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1536 Menno Simons, a Dutch Priest, renounced the Catholic faith and gave his support to the Anabaptists. From his name came the term, "Mennonites."
- 1683 Francis Pastorius secured a grant of land for 15,000 acres from William Penn.
- 1683 The ship *Concord* brought a colony of settlers to Philadelphia. Germantown was settled by Dutch and German immigrants.
- 1710 Mennonite migration began into Bucks and Lancaster Counties in Pennsylvania.
- 1720 The height of Amish immigration occurred in the period 1720-40.
- 1725 The Dordrecht Confession was adopted at a conference of Pennsylvania Mennonite ministers as a Mennonite statement of faith.
- 1756 The Seven Years War slowed down Mennonite immigration to America.
- 1760 Until 1760, the Mennonites practiced a communal style life, with a division of membership according to sex, with these divisions called "choirs."
- 1812 In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, John Herr organized the Reformed Mennonites.
- 1840 A dispute arose in the Groffdate Congregation, and Jacob Stauffer broke away from the original order of the Mennonites and formed the Stauffer Group.
- 1860 The General Conference Mennonite Church was formed, uniting Mennonites throughout the United States who were interested in doing missionary work together.
- 1872 The Old Order (Wisler) Mennonite Church was named for Jacob Wisler, the first Mennonite bishop in Indiana, who led a separation from that church in 1872 to protest the use of English in the services and the introduction of Sunday schools. It was joined in 1886, 1893, and 1901 by groups with similar ideas from Canada, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

~ Records, Resources ~

The Mennonites originated in two countries--Switzerland and The Netherlands, then spread across Europe and to America. Many of the Mennonites who came to America emigrated from Montbeliard, France, and Switzerland.

In the New World, the Mennonites branched into several factions. The (Old) Mennonite Church was the parent group and is still the largest. Other groups include the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The Amish Church was named for Jacob Ammann, a 17th century Swiss Mennonite bishop. Amish Mennonites originally settled in Pennsylvania and later moved into Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and Canada. The Old Order Amish Church has been continuous since the peak immigration period of 1720-1740. This church adheres to older forms of worship and attire, worships in private homes, and has no conferences. Today, there are fewer than a thousand Old Order Amish Church districts.

The Archives of the Mennonite Church
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Library and Archives
PO Box 82
Harleysville, PA 19438

Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives
Eastern Mennonite College
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Mennonite Historical Library
Bluffton College
Bluffton, OH 45817

Mennonite Library and Archives
Bethel College
North Newton, KS 67117

~ Bibliography ~

The Mennonite Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement. 4 vols. Hillsboro, Kansas: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1955-1959.